



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, August 15, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report on this year's National Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead. TBS led with reports that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe held a teleconference this morning and agreed that what is most important is to prevent North Korea from launching missiles. NTV, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was briefed on the plan to launch mid-range ballistic missiles toward Guam and said that he will "watch the foolish and stupid conduct of the Americans for a bit longer."

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump, PM Abe agree on need to prevent North from launching missiles

All networks reported that Prime Minister Abe held a teleconference with President Trump for about 30 minutes this morning, saying that the two leaders agreed on the importance of preventing North Korea from launching ballistic missiles toward Guam. NHK said the two leaders also confirmed that the international community must unite and strengthen pressure against the North since holding dialogue for the sake of dialogue is pointless. According to the network, Abe told the President: "Since North Korea has announced that it will launch ballistic missiles toward Guam after flying over our nation, I very much appreciate that you have been conveying the message that the U.S. is committed to defending its allies." In response, the President reportedly expressed strong concern about North Korea's announcement on the missile launch. In addition, the President reportedly explained that he urged China to play a role during his teleconference with President Xi, to which Abe expressed appreciation for the efforts of the U.S. They also reportedly agreed that the roles of China and Russia are important, and confirmed that the U.S. and Japan will take concrete actions to

enhance their defense and response capabilities.

GOJ asks South Korea to take action to prevent spread of comfort women statues

Nikkei reported online on the disclosure by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga this morning that the GOJ has asked the ROK government to adopt measures to stop the installation of a large number of comfort women memorials across the country. The government spokesman expressed concern by saying: "These moves may dump cold water on our efforts to develop a future-oriented relationship with South Korea."

In a related development, most papers took up a speech delivered today by ROK President Moon, who asked the Japanese leaders to have the "courage" to resolve such history issues as the comfort women and the use of forced labor by Japanese companies during WWII. Moon promised his administration's utmost efforts to restore the honor of the victims and to see that they receive compensation. However, the South Korean leader also emphasized the importance of keeping history issues separate from the overall bilateral ties by saying: "It is not desirable for the past to hinder the development of a future-oriented relationship with Japan.... The two nations must work together for peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region."

North Korea sounded out Japan on holding dialogue at early date

Fuji TV said it learned that North Korean Foreign Minister Ri sounded out Foreign Minister Kono on "holding dialogue at an early date" when they spoke briefly on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila on Aug. 6. The network said the GOJ believes that North Korea may or may not choose to carry out further provocations around the time of the joint U.S.-ROK military exercises scheduled to begin on Aug. 21, adding that Tokyo will try to determine the true intention behind North Korea's offer of dialogue. The network added that although Prime Minister Abe will depart for his summer vacation in Yamanashi this afternoon, he will shorten his vacation by about a week and closely monitor North Korea's moves.

- [Abe, Trump vow to work to stop N. Korea missile launch at Guam](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Russia eye cruise tour around disputed islands](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Russia in final arrangements to build entry/departure facility off Habomai](#) (Mainichi)
- [Kyoto to host 2020 U.N. crime congress](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Trump's off-course policies pose the greatest risk to the U.S. economy](#) (The Japan News)
- [Nursing care schools see surge in foreign students](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

Lawmakers visit Yasukuni on war anniversary, but cabinet ministers stay home

All networks reported that today marks the 72nd anniversary of the end of WWII, saying that Prime Minister Abe refrained from visiting Yasukuni Shrine again this year but instead made a ritual donation. Fuji TV said the LDP's Chief Deputy Secretary General Shinjiro Koizumi, Acting Secretary General Hagiuda, and former Defense Minister Inada visited the shrine. In addition, about 60 members of the Diet Members' Group for Visiting the Yasukuni Shrine also paid homage there. Meanwhile, Fuji TV said that no incumbent cabinet ministers have visited the shrine this time.

- [Spam emails in Chinese inundate cabinet ministers](#) (Sankei)
- [Interview with new public safety commission chief](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [New justice minister determined to properly administer anti-conspiracy law](#) (Nikkei)
- [Health Minister Kato vows to implement work-style reform](#) (Mainichi)
- [Sugawara to be appointed special advisor to cabinet](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP Kishida, Nikai factions clash over whether to readmit defected lawmaker](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Aug. 14](#) (Nikkei)

OPINION POLLS

- [Opinion poll & results from Yomiuri Shimbun](#) (Yomiuri)

ECONOMY

- [Japan still firmly on growth track](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Consumer Commission mandates country of origin indication on all processed food from FY2022](#) (Nikkei)
- [Some Japanese brand legacies stand to profit from geographical indication; others, not so much](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan's agricultural exports rise but government's one trillion yen goal remains distant](#) (Nikkei)
- [New JA-Zenchu President poised to take firm stance toward government](#) (Nikkei)

SOCIETY

War ended on Aug. 15, but not in Sakhalin

"NHK Special" aired on Monday evening reported that even after World War II ended on Aug. 15, 1945, a fierce battle between Japan and the Soviet Union raged for seven days in the southern region of Sakhalin that was administered by Japan from 1905 to 1945 under the name of Karafuto. About 400,000 Japanese lived in the region at the time. It is said that 5,000 to 6,000 people died in the battle, including child soldiers, small children, and their mothers. The program said since Karafuto suffered a major blackout on Aug. 15, the Japanese residents were not aware that the war had ended. Many committed suicide rather than risk capture by Soviet forces. The program interviewed several survivors who talked about the pointlessness of war and expressed anger that they were not informed that the war had ended.

- [U.S. WWII veteran returns Japanese flag to owner's family](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

GOJ officially announces "2+2" meeting to be held on Aug. 17

Jiji Press reported that the GOJ officially announced today that a "2+2" meeting will be held in Washington on Thursday. Foreign Minister Kono and Defense Minister Onodera from the Japanese side and Secretary of State Tillerson and Secretary of Defense Mattis from the U.S. side will attend the meeting. In addition to separate foreign ministerial and defense ministerial meetings, Jiji said FM Kono and Secretary of Commerce Ross are expected to hold talks. During the "2+2" meeting, the officials are expected to discuss the issue of North Korea's announcement on launching mid-range ballistic missiles toward Guam. Jiji quoted DM Onodera as telling reporters today: "The security environment is extremely severe. I hope to exchange views on a wide range of issues, including North Korea and the East and South China Seas, and further strengthen the alliance."

- [Japan eyes utilizing smaller firms' technologies for SDF equipment](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Emerging plan to invite MSDF deployment on Yonaguni Island](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [U.S. company receiving increasing orders for nuclear shelters from Japan](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)



Onodera dismisses Okinawa's call for reducing defense burden

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo took up Monday's meeting in Naha between Defense Minister Onodera and Okinawa Governor Onaga, explaining that the cabinet minister dismissed the local

leader's requests for the Abe administration to reduce the base-hosting burden on the island prefecture, including cancelling FRF construction, revising the SOFA, and suspending Osprey flights. The papers said Onodera's "soft" approach toward Okinawa was superficial, claiming that the Abe administration's policy of sympathizing with Okinawa is an "empty promise." Ryukyu Shimpo said, however, that Onodera accepted Onaga's demand that he take up issues related to Kadena AB such as the use of the Navy ramp and parachute drop drills during the coming 2+2 ministerial meeting in Washington on Aug. 17.

